

Written statement of John O. Schwartz

Concerning DMHAS funding

CT. General Assembly/Appropriations Committee

2/24/2022

Sen. Osten, Rep. Walker and members of the committee;

Thank you for this opportunity to express my gratitude for the funding that the committee and the legislature provide to the CT dept. of Mental health and addiction services. My name is John Schwartz, I am an East Haddam resident and a registered voter. DMHAS provides essential support to some of our state's most vulnerable citizens, and does so in an efficient and compassionate manner. By funding, implementing and sustaining a variety of initiatives across CT, DMHAS impacts the lives of thousands of CT residents daily. I write this testimony in order to express my support for increased funding for DMHAS. With the disproportionate impact that Covid-19 has had on those who struggle with mental health and substance use problems, expanded access to resources has become more critical than ever, and innovative means of keeping those people connected to care has become increasingly important.

The loss of connection and general anxiety caused by the current long-running public health situation has put more CT residents at risk of serious physical and mental health outcomes than ever before and DMHAS stands on the front lines in the state's efforts to support those adversely impacted by it. Now is the time to bolster the department's capacity to support our citizens who struggle.

As a person in long-term recovery from substance use disorder, I can definitively say that affording people like me the opportunity to connect with and be empowered by a community of my peers can often be the deciding factor between sustainable long-term recovery and a seemingly endless cycle of misery and despair. As the manager of the Windham Recovery Community Center in Willimantic, I see the results of this connection and the positive impact it has on the community on a daily basis. I implore the committee to give DMHAS the resources it needs to not only sustain, but to increase the important work that they do across the state for the benefit of all residents, because supporting our most vulnerable benefits all of us.

Thank you for your consideration,

John O. Schwartz